

With these mortals on the ground.

Enter Theseus, Egeus, Hippolita and all his traine.

Thef. Goe one of you, finde out the Forrester,

For now our obseruation is perform'd
And since we haue the wayward of the day,
My Loue shall heare the musike of my hounds.

Vncouple in the Westering valley, let them goe;
Dispatch I say, and finde the Forrester.
We will faire Queene, vp to the Mountaines top,
And marke the musickall confusion.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bayed the Beare
With hounds of Sparta; neuer did I heare
Such gallant chiding. For besides the groues,
The skies, the fountaines, every region neere,
Seeme all one mutuell cry. I neuer heard
So musickall a discord, such sweet thunder.

Thef. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kinde,
So flew'd, so fanded, and their heads are hung
With eares that sweepe away the morning dew,
Crooke kneed, and dew-lapt, like *Theffalus* Bulls,
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each vnder each. A cry more tuneable
Was neuer hallow'd to, nor cheer'd with horne,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in *Thessaly*;

Egeus. My Lord, this is my daughter heere asleepe,
And this *Lysander*, this *Demetrius* is,
This *Helena*, olde *Nedars Helena*,
I wonder of this being heere together.

The. No doubt they rose vp early, to obserue
The right of May; and hearing our intent,
Came heere in grace of our solemnity.

But speake *Egeus*, is not this the day
That *Hermia* should giue answer of her choice?

Egeus. It is, my Lord.
Thef. Goe bid the hunt-men wake them with their
horns.

Hornes and they wake.

Shout within, they all start vp.

Thef. Good morrow friends: Saint *Valentine* is past,
Begin these wood birds but to couple now?

Lys. Pardon my Lord.
Thef. I pray you all stand vp.

I know you two are Riuall enemies.
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so farre from iealousie,
To sleepe by hate, and feare no enmity.

Lys. My Lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Halfe sleepe, halfe waking. But as yet, I sweare,
I cannot truly say how I came heere.
But as I thinke (for truly would I speake)
And now I doe berinke me, so it is;
I came with *Hermia* hither. Our intent
Was to be gone from *Athens*, where we might be
Without the perill of the *Athenian* Law.

Ege. Enough, enough, my Lord; you haue enough;
I beg the Law, the Law, vpon his head;
They would haue stolne away, they would *Demetrius*;

Thereby to haue defeated you and me;
You of your wife, and me of my consent;
Of my consent, that she should be your wife.

Dem. My Lord, faire *Helena* told me of their health,
Of this their purpose hither, to this wood,

And in furie hither followed them;
Faile *Helena*, in fancy followed me.
But my good Lord, I wot not by what power,
(But by some power it is) my Loue

To *Hermia* (melted as the snow) and could I haue
Seems to me now as the remembrance of an idle gaudie,
Which in my childhood I did doat vpon;

And all the faith, the vertue of my heart,
The obiect and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is onely *Helena*. To her, my Lord,
Was I betroth'd, ere I see *Hermia*;
But like a sicknesse did I loath this food,
But as in health, come to my naturall taste,
Now doe I wish it, loue it, long for it,
And will for euermore be true to it.

Thef. Faire Louers, you are fortunately met;
Of this discourse we shall heare more anon.
Egeus, I will ouer-bear your will;
For in the Temple, by and by with vs,
These couples shall eternally be knit.

And for the morning now is something worne,
Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.
Away, with vs to *Athens*; three and three,
Wee'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

Come *Hippolita*.
Dem. These things seeme small & vndistinguishable,
Like farre off mountaines turned into Clouds.

Her. Me-thinks I see these things with parted eye,
When euery thing seemes double.

Hel. So me-thinks:
And I haue found *Demetrius*, like a iewel,
Mine owne, and not mine owne.

Dem. It seemes to mee,
That yet we sleepe, we dreame. Do not you thinke,
The Duke was heere, and bid vs follow him?

Her. Yea, and my Father.
Hel. And *Hippolita*.

Lys. And he bid vs follow to the Temple.
Dem. Why then we are awake; lets follow him, and
by the way let vs recount our dreames.

Bottome wakes.

Cl. When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer,
My next is, most faire *Piramus*. Hey ho. *Peter Quince*!
Flute the bellows-mender? *Shout* the tinker? *Staruelling*?
Gods my life! *Stolne* hence, and left me asleepe. I
haue had a most rare vision. I had a dreame, past the wit
of man, to say, what dreame it was. Man is but an Assle,
if he goe about to expound this dreame. Me-thought
was, there is no man can tell what. Me-thought I was,
and me-thought I had. But man is but a patch'd foole,
if he will offer to say, what me-thought I had. The eye of
man hath not heard, the eare of man hath not seen, mans
hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceiue, nor his
heart to report, what my dreame was. I will get *Peter*
Quince to write a ballet of this dreame, it shall be called
Bottomes Dreame, because it hath no bottom; and I will
sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke. Per-
adventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it
at her death.

Enter Quince, Flute, Thisbe, Snout, and Staruelling.

Quin. Haue you sent to *Bottomes* house? Is he come
home yet?

Staru. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt hee is
transported.

Thef.

This. If he come not, then the play is mar'd. It goes
not forward, doth it?

Quin. It is not possible: you haue not a man in all
Athens, able to discharge *Piramus* but he.

This. No, hee hath simply the best wit of any handy-
craft man in *Athens*.

Quin. Yea, and the best person too, and hee is a very
Paramour, for a sweet voyce.

This. You must say, Paragon. A Paramour is (God
blesse vs) a thing of nought.

Enter Snug the Ioyner.

Snug. Masters, the Duke is coming from the Tem-
ple, and there is two or three Lords & Ladies more mar-
ried: If our sport had gone forward, we had all bin made
men.

This. O sweet bully *Bottom*: thus hath hee lost fixe-
pence a day, during his life; he could not haue scaped fixe-
pence a day. And the Duke had not giuen him fixe pence
a day for playing *Piramus*, hee be hang'd. He would haue
deferred it. Sixpence a day in *Piramus*, or nothing.

Enter Bottom.

Bot. Where are these Lads? Where are these hearts?

Quin. *Bottom*, o most couragious day! O most hap-
pie houre!

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders; but ask me
not what. For if I tell you, I am no true *Athenian*. I
will tell you euery thing as it fell out.

Qu. Let vs heare, sweet *Bottom*.

Bot. Not a word of me: all that I will tell you, is, that
the Duke hath din'd. Get your apparell together, good
strings to your beards, new ribbands to your pumps,
meete presently at the Palace, euery man looke ore his
part: for the short and the long is, our play is preferred:
In any case let *Thisbe* haue cleane linnen; and let not him
that plays the Lion, paire his nailes, for they shall hang
out for the Lions clawes. And most deare Actors, eate
no Onions, nor Garlicke; for wee are to vtter sweete
breath, and I doe not doubt but to heare them say, it is a
sweet Comedy. No more words: away, go away.

Exeunt.

Actus Quintus.

Enter Theseus, Hippolita, Egeus and his Lords.

Hip. 'Tis strange my *Theseus*, y these louers speake of.

The. More strange then true. I neuer may beleuee
These anticke fables, nor these Fairy toyes,
Louers and mad men haue such seething braines,
Such shaping phantasies, that apprehend more
Then coole reason euer comprehends.
The Lunaticke, the Louer, and the Poet,
Are of imagination all compact.

One sees more diuels then vasse hell can hold;
That is the mad man. The Louer, all as franticke,
Sees *Helens* beauty in a brow of *Egypt*.

The Poets eye in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance
From heauen to earth, from earth to heauen.

And as imagination bodies forth the forms of things
Vnknowne; the Poets pen turns them to shapes,
And giues to aire nothing, a locall habitation,
And a name. Such tricks hath strong imagination,

That if it would but apprehend
It comprehends some bringing
Or in the night, imagining to
How easie is a bulsh suppos'd

Hip. But all the storie of
And all their minds transfigured
More witnesse then fancies
And growes to something of
But howsoeuer, strange, and

*Enter louers, Lysander,
and H*

The. Heere come the louers
Ioy, gentle friends, ioy and f
Of loue accompany your hea

Lys. More then to vs, wait
your boord, your bed.

The. Come now, what m
we haue,
To weare away this long age

Between our after supper, and
Where is our vsuall manag

What Renels are in hand? Is
To eate the anguish of a tortu

Call *Egeus*.
Ege. Heere mighty *Theseus*

The. Say, what abridg
ning?

What maske? What musicke
The lazie time, if not with fo

Ege. There is a breefe how
Make choise of which your H

Lys. The battell with the C
By an Athenian Eunuch, to th

The. Wee'l none of that.
In glory of my kinsman Herc

Lys. The riot of the tipple
Tearing the Thracian finger, i

The. That is an old deuice
When I from *Thebes* came last

Lys. The thrice three Mus
of learning, late decaist in beg

The. That is some Satire k
Not sorting with a nuptiall ce

Lys. A tedious breefe Scen
And his loue *Thisbe*; very trag

The. Merry and tragicall?
is, hot ice, and wondrous stran

finde the concord of this dis
Ege. A play there is, my L

Which is as breefe, as I haue k
But by ten words, my Lord, i

Which makes it tedious. For
There is not one word apt, on

And tragicall my noble Lord
Therein doth kill himselfe. W

Reheart, I must confesse, ma
But more merrie teares, the pa

Never shed.
Thef. What are they that

Ege. Hard handed men, th
Which neuer labour'd in their
And now haue toyed their vn

With this same play, against y
The. And we will heare it.